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LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF THE LATE ILLUSTRIQUS
DUTCHESS OF KINGSTON:
INTERSPERSED WITH
MEMOIRS
OF HER FAMILY; AND
ANECDOTES
OF SEVERAL CELEBRATED PERSONAGES,
MANY OF WHOM ARE STILL LIVING.

COLLECTED FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1788.



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ANSWER

REFERENCES

Journal of Clinical Endocrinology

201-202-203-204

PICTURES OF THE BAPTIST. MOST GRACIOUS.

YOKOHO

SCHEMATIC AND GONOCYCLIC CRYSTALS

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P R E F A C E.

SUCH is the lot of Humanity, that very few pass through life perfectly free from censure. What share of praise or dispraise belongs to the memory of the lately departed noble Female, whose Life and Character form the subject of the following pages, is not for me to determine. That the Duchess of Kingston possessed many amiable qualifications, cannot be denied. Let the reader, therefore, peculiarly endeavour to imitate these! Let her weaknessess and imperfections point out to him,

a 2 *that*

that neither rank nor parts, however shining, can screen from the rigid eye of criticism, the smallest deviations from the paths of virtue!

In detailing the Memoirs of the Dutchess's Family; and in relating the Anecdotes of the various great and eminent Personages who had been connected with her Grace, some of whom are now removed to that bourne from which no traveller returns, I have been actuated by the most sacred adherence to truth.

Upon the whole, I think I need say nothing concerning the utility of this little work: it will readily be pointed out to every attentive reader.

The A U T H O R.

LONDON. ADELIPI. September 22, 1788.



L I F E

OF THE LATE

DUTCHESS OF KINGSTON,

£3c.

E LIZABETH CHUDLEIGH, for that was the maiden name of our Heroine, was well descended from a very ancient family, situated in Devonshire. One of her male ancestors had a naval command in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; and gallantly acquitted himself in the ever memorable defeat of the Spanish Armada, by Admiral Drake, in the year 1588. The father of Miss Chudleigh was a Colonel in the army; who, dying when she was at an early age, his relict had the care of a daughter devolved on her, with little more for their mutual subsistence, than the pension usually allowed to the widows of officers. Thus harrowed in point of fortune, Mrs. Chudleigh prudently availed herself of the best substitute for money—good connections.

tions. These the rank, situation, and habits of her husband, had placed within her power. She hired an house fit, at that less refined period of time, for a fashionable town residence; and she accommodated an inmate, for the purpose of adding to the scantiness of her income. Her daughter Elizabeth was now distinguished for a brilliancy of repartee, and for other qualifications highly commendatory, because extremely pleasing. An opportunity for the display of them to every advantage the possessor could reasonably desire, offered at a moment when fortune was benignantly disposed. The Prince of Wales, Father of our present amiable Sovereign, had his court at Leicester-house. Mr. William Pultney, who then blazed as a meteor in the political hemisphere of opposition, was honoured with the particular regard and friendship of the Prince. Miss Chudleigh was fortunate enough to get introduced to Mr. Pultney; and he obtained for her, at the age of eighteen, the appointment of a Maid of Honour to the Princess of Wales. Mr. Pultney did still more than thus place her in an elevated station, he endeavoured to cultivate her understanding. To him, Miss Chudleigh read; and with him, when separated by distance, she literally corresponded. Some improvement she obtained by these advantages, but the extreme vivacity



city of her nature, prevented any considerable acquirements. Her maxim on every subject, was, according to her own expression, to be "Short, clear, and surprising." A voluminous writer was consequently her aversion: and a prolix story, however interesting, disgusted her merely from the circumstance of its prolixity. —— With such a pupil Mr. Pultney could laugh; and, in despair of his literary instruction making any deep impression on the mind of his adopted fair-one, he changed the scene, and endeavoured to initiate her in the science of œconomy, instead of books. The value of a penny this gentleman had studied to a nicety: one of his practical theorems was, that a man with the price of a pot of porter in his pocket, should purchase only a pint, however extreme his thirst might be. This was the *great* Wm. Pultney, who, like other Patriots, without principle, degenerated into a Peer without honour. He died June 8, 1764, at the advanced age of 82 years. He was descended from one of the most ancient families in the kingdom: and born to an affluent fortune, he very early had a seat in the House of Commons. There he warmly distinguished himself against the Ministry. In 1714, Mr. Pultney was raised to the place of Secretary at War; and not long after to that of Cofferer

ferer to his Majesty's household. Upon the fall of Sir Robert Walpole, who had acted as prime Minister for many years, Mr. Pultney about the year 1741, was sworn of the Privy Council, and soon afterwards was created a Peer by the title of Earl of Bath. He long had lived in the very focus of popular observation, and was respected as the chief bulwark against the encroachments of the crown. But from the moment he accepted a title, all his favour with the people was at an end, and the rest of his life was spent in contemning that applause which he no longer could secure. When he made his exit, not a vestige of regard was to be found in any breast, for the memory of that man, who, at one time, was almost idolized. By his dying without issue his title became extinct. His paternal estate devolved to his brother Lieutenant-General Pultney; and in his will, among other bequests, was found that of an annuity of six hundred pounds to the ingenious Mr. Colman, whom, it is said by some, he assisted in writing the *Connoisseur*.

The station to which Miss Chudleigh was advanced, united to many personal attractions, produced a number of admirers: Some of actual, others of expectant titles. Among the former, was his Grace the Duke of Hamilton,

milton, grand-father of the late, and also of the present noble Duke of that title : and whom Miss Gunning had afterwards the good fortune to obtain for a consort. The Duke was passionately fond of Miss Chudleigh, and the ardour with which he pressed his suit, attained the end he then wished to accomplish, which was, a solemn engagement on the part of Miss Chudleigh, that on his return from making a tour, for which he was then preparing, she would become his wife. There were reasons why this event should not immediately take place: That the engagement would be fulfilled at the specified time, both parties considered as a moral certainty. A mutual pledge was given and accepted; the Duke commenced his proposed tour, and the parting condition was, that he should write by every opportunity: Miss Chudleigh, of course, was reciprocally bounden to answer his Grace's Ovidian epistles. Thus the arrangement of fortune seemed to have united a pair, who possibly might have experienced much happiness in the union; for between the Duke of Hamilton and Miss Chudleigh there was a similarity of disposition; which is always an essential ingredient, in order to ensure felicity in our matrimonial connections. They were not, however, it would appear, to be joined. Distrust was to take place of unbounded confidence; and they

they were to be dissatisfied with each other, without either party being culpable.

Miss Chudleigh had an aunt whose name was Hanmer. At her house Captain Hervey, the late Earl of Bristol, (father of the Right Rev. Fred. Hervey present Earl of Bristol), visited. To this Gentleman Mrs. Hanmer became so exceedingly partial, that she favoured his views on her niece, and engaged her efforts to effect, if possible, a matrimonial union. There were two difficulties which would have been insurmountable, if not opposed by the fertile genius of a female. Miss Chudleigh *disliked* Captain Hervey, and she was *betrothed* to the Duke of Hamilton. To render the last circumstance nugatory, the letters of his Grace were intercepted by Mrs. Hanmer; and his supposed silence giving offence to her niece, she worked so successfully on her pride, as to induce her to abandon all thoughts of the lover, whose passion she had cherished with delight. A conduct the reverse of that imputed to the Duke, was observed by Capt. Hervey. He was all which assiduity could dictate, or attention perform. He had daily access to Miss Chudleigh, and each interview was artfully improved by the aunt, to the promotion of her own views. The letters of his Grace of Hamilton, which regularly arrived, were as regularly

gularly suppressed; until piqued beyond longer endurance, Miss Chudleigh was prevailed on to accept the hand of Capt. Hervey, and by a private marriage, to ensure a participation of his future honours and fortune. The ceremony was performed in a private chapel adjoining the country mansion-house of Mr. Merrill. The only surviving witness is a woman of the name of Cradock, who was a servant in the family at the time, and is now considerably advanced in years.

On a review of life, every reflecting mind may easily trace the predominant good or evil experienced, to some wilful error, or injudicious mistake, which operated as a determinate cause, and gave the colour to our fate. This was the case with Miss Chudleigh; for the hour in which she became united with Capt. Hervey, proved to her the original of every subsequent calamity. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*, is a compliment to the dead exacted by long usage; conformably to which we treat their names with reverence, whose deeds deserve the severest reproach. On this principle it can only be said, that the connubial rites were attended with consequences injurious to health, as well as unproductive of fecundity; and, that from the night following the day on which the marriage was solemnized, Miss Chudleigh,

Chudleigh, for we must still use her maiden name, resolved never to have any further connexion with her husband. To prevail on him not to claim her as his wife, required all the art of which she was mistress. The best disuasive argument she could use was, the loss of her situation as Maid of Honour, should the marriage be publickly known. The finances of Capt. Hervey not enabling him, at the time, to compensate such a loss, most probably operated as a prudential motive for his yielding to the entreaties of his wife. He accordingly did so comply, but in a manner which at times indicated a strong desire to play the tyrant. In fact, as the departed Dutchesse frequently expressed the situation of her feelings, "her misery commenced with the arrival of Capt. Hervey in England; and the greatest joy she experienced was the intelligence of his departure." Hence, whilst the ship in which he was to sail, remained at Spithead or in the Downs, she was tremblingly alive with the apprehension that its destination might be countermanded. A fair wind out of the channel was the soother of her mind; and she was always extremely inquisitive as to the duration of the voyage or cruize, as well as to the probable intervening accidents which might still longer retard it.

Such

Such were some of the immediate consequences of an union brought about by artifice, effected clandestinely, and originating in the one party from pique, in the other from a more reprehensible passion. The remote consequences of this most unfortunate assimilation of body, not of mind, will necessarily form parts of a subsequent detail. Let us hope for the consolation of the more amiable sex, that the case of Miss Chudleigh, in one sense, is not applicable to many of them. To her, matrimony was the beginning of sorrows.

Miss Chudleigh, now Mrs. Hervey, a maid in appearance, a wife in disguise, seemed to those who judge from externals only, to be in an enviable situation. Of the higher circles she was the attractive center; of gayer life, the invigorating spirit. Her Royal Mistress not only smiled on her, but actually approved of her. A few friendships she cemented; and conquests she made in such abundance, that, like Cæsar in a triumph, she had a train of captives at her heels. Yet, with all this display of happiness, she wanted that, without which there is not happiness in this sublunary state — *peace of mind*. Her husband, quieted for a time, grew obstreperous as she became more the object of admiration. He felt his right, and was determined to assert it. She endeavoured by

letter, to negociate him into peace ; but her efforts did not succeed. He demanded a private interview ; and enforcing his demands by threats of exposure in case of refusal, she yielded through compulsion. The meeting was at the apartment of Capt. Hervey; a black servant only in the house. On entering the room where he sat, the first thing done was to prevent her retreat by locking the door. What passed may be better imagined than expressed. The bosom of a wife, burning with indignant rage for past injuries sustained in her health, yet obliged to smother the flame of resentment, and to assume the mildness of complacency. On the other hand, an husband, feeling himself the Lord Paramount over a defenceless woman, whose hopes he had blasted, whose person he had defiled. This, as the Dutchesse, when speaking of it, with tears in her eyes, used to say, was " an assignation with a vengeance." It ended like every interview which he had with Capt. Hervey, fatally for her. He would not permit her to retire, without consenting to that commerce, delectable only when kindred souls melt into each other with the soft embrace. The fruit of this interview was, the addition of a boy to the human race. Cæsar Hawkins, a gentleman eminent in the line of surgery, became the professional confident on this occasion. Miss Chudleigh

Chudleigh removed to Chelsea for a change of air, and after a time returned to Leicester-house, perfectly recovered from her indisposition. The infant soon sunk into the arms of death ; and like “*the baseless fabric of a vision,*” left only the tale of its existence to be related.

While these and a variety of other circumstances were passing between Miss Chudleigh and her husband, the Duke of Hamilton, arrived from his travels. He lost not a moment in paying homage to the idol of his affections, and in having the mystery of all his letters remaining unanswered, explained. Flighty as in other respects he was, to Miss Chudleigh his constancy remained unshaken. The interview developed the whole, and placed Mrs. Hanmer in her true light, that of the authoress of mischief. But as the palliation of past evil, the Duke made a generous tender of his hand, where his heart was already centered. The rejection of this offer, which it was impossible to accept, and almost as impossible to explain the reason why it was rejected, occasioned emotions in the Duke, which the heart can feel better than language can paint, or the pen explain. Still more, Miss Chudleigh was compelled to prohibit his visits. The sequel of his conduct is known. His Grace and a noble Earl

agreed to club their follies to keep each other in countenance, and they both married two Hibernian Misses, who, in the hour of good fortune, had luckily brought their stock in trade to a market, where beauty frequently fetches an excellent price.

The Duke of Hamilton thus refused by Miss Chudleigh, the late Duke of Ancaster and several other nobles experienced a similar fate. This astonished the fashionable world, and the Mother of Miss Chudleigh, who was a total stranger to the private marriage of her daughter, reprobated her folly in proper terms. At once to be freed, at least for a time, from the embarrassments which environed her, Miss Chudleigh determined on foreign travel as the mean. She embarked for the continent; and chose the circle of Germany for her tour. She resided some time at Berlin; then went to Dresden; and, as she aspired to the acquaintance of crowned heads, she was gratified by the late King of Prussia, who not only conversed, but corresponded with her. It is not by this meant, that there was any thing more in his letters, than what the politeness of a Gentleman dictated to a Lady, in spirit and enterprise above the level of her sex. The epistles of Frederic, which consisted of about four lines, written in a hand scarcely legible,

served

served Miss Chudleigh to gratify her vanity by talking about. But, in the Electress of Saxony she found a friend, whose affection for her continued to the latest period of life. The Electress was a woman of sense, honour, virtue, and religion. Her letters were replete with kindness, while her hand distributed presents to Miss Chudleigh out of the treasury of abundance. Her heart was interested for her happiness. This she evinced, pending the prosecution for bigamy ; for at that time a letter from the Electress to the Dutchess contained the following passage :—“ You have long experienced my love : my revenue, my protection, my every thing you may command. Come then, my dear life, to an asylum of peace. Quit a country, where if you are bequeathed a cloak, some pretender may start up, and ruin you by law to prove it your property. Let me have you at Dresden.” This passage is literally rendered from the French.

Miss Chudleigh returning from the Continent, Lord Howe, who signalized himself in America the war before last, became her suitor. Matrimony was out of the question ; but an intimacy subsisting, the world then talked, as the world now talks, a great deal of nonsense in a most absurd style. This garrulity, however, neither lessened the conse-

quence of Miss Chudleigh, nor interrupted her amusements. She ran the career of pleasure ; enlivened the Court circles ; each year became more ingratiated with the Mistresses whom she served ; led fashions ; played whist with Lord Chesterfield ; rioted with Lady Harrington and Miss Ashe ; figured at a masquerade ; and laughed at the lover whom she chose not to favour with her smiles, with all the confounding grace of a woman of quality.

The reflection put off, however, for the day, too frequently intruded an unwelcome visitor at night. Capt. Hervey, the husband, like a perturbed spirit, was eternally crossing the path trodden by his wife. Was she in the rooms at Bath, he was sure to be there. At a route, ridotto, or ball, there was this fell destroyer of peace, embittering every pleasure, and blighting the fruit of happiness by the pestilential malignancy of his presence. As a proof of his disposition to annoy, he menaced his wife with an intimation that he would disclose the marriage to the Princess of Wales. In this Miss Chudleigh anticipated him, by being the first relater of the circumstance. Her Royal Mistress heard and pitied her. She continued her patronage to the hour of her death.

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At last a stratagem was either suggested, or it occurred to Miss Chudleigh, at once to deprive Capt. Hervey of the power to claim her as his wife. The clergyman who married them was dead. The register book was in careless hands. An handsome compliment was paid for the inspection, and, while the person in whose custody it was, listened to an amusing story, Miss Chudleigh tore out the register. Thus imagining the business accomplished, she, for a time, bid defiance to her husband. Her better fate influenced the heart of a man in her favour, who was the exemplar of amiability. This was the late Duke of Kingston.

The Life, an outline of which is now submitted to the public judgment, was of such a singular commixture of propensities, as to afford abundant matter for improving reflection. That there is, in the human breast, a ruling passion, by which the will is influenced, and consequently the judgment finally determined, must be evident to every inquisitive mind. This passion it is, which, serving as the spring of action, gives rise to a conduct perfectly regular, or wholly eccentric, as the producing cause is more or less bounded by some higher motive. Hence the necessity there is for some superinduced principle, as a check to the ruling passion, whatever

ever it be. Where this is wanting, all is confusion; errors engender substantial ills, and that portion of our existence contracted within the narrow span of time, is doomed to unhappiness.

The subject of these Anecdotes was among the too many eminent instances of this. Settled principles she had none. Not that her deficiency arose so much from viciousness, as from ignorance. Her mind, to borrow Mr. Locke's figure, was a mere *tabula rasa*, a blank as to every thing beyond mortality. All with her centered in Self and sensation. Her ruling passion was displayed in the acquirement of any species of property, the possession of which gratified vanity. This she hoarded with the gripe of a miser, or dissipated with the profusion of a spendthrift, when flattered by knavery or artifice into a mood of extravagance. The diamonds she had amassed were her travelling companions; and she was always ready to defend them, with a brace of pistols, at the hazard of her life. To her jewel box her orisons were as regularly paid, as a devotee is found constant to her matins. She lately slumbered over abundance, nor was she ever awake to that glorious feeling which actuates natures truly noble, and teaches them to consider a superflux of wealth as the donation of heaven,

heaven, granted in trust for the relief of indigence, the soothing of calamity, or the reward of merit. That the late Dutchess of Kingston had early in life the power of being the distributor of much good, is certain; to obtain the means was her principal object; to neglect the end, her general habit. Her cunning, for of wisdom she possessed not a ray, was solely directed to gain. Fortunately for society, cunning is more frequently defeated than successful. This was so remarkably experienced by our heroine, that a relation of the case may serve as a moral lesson to the world.—Thus, then, runs the story:

In the natural course of events, Captain Hervey succeeded to the Earldom of Bristol. With rank, there was fortune, and both were most inviting objects to a mind sordid and vain. When a succession to the family honours and revenue became highly probable, a short period before it took place, Miss Chudleigh went to the house of Mr. Merrill, in whose chapel she was married. Her sensible reason was a jaunt out of town—her real design was to procure, if possible, the insertion of her marriage with Capt. Hervey in the book which, to destroy the written evidence of that marriage, she had formerly mutilated. With this view she condescended to every artifice, and dealt out promises with a li-

a liberal hand. The officiating clerk, who, like Scrub in the play, was a person of various avocations, was to be promoted to the extent of his wishes. The book was managed by the Lady to her content, and she returned to London secretly exulting in the excellence and success of her machination.—She did, it is true, succeed, but it was in laying the ground-work of that very evidence, which, in conjunction with oral testimony, operated afterwards to her conviction and disgrace. Here was cunning, despicable cunning, enveloping the possessor in a net of her own fabricating. No wonder, when her hour of degradation arrived, that she fell unpitied.

Thus conditioned was Miss Chudleigh, when the Duke of Kingston became her admirer.—Re-married, as it were, by her own stratagem, the participation of ducal honours became legally impossible. The chains of wedlock, which the lady had been so industrious in shaking off, or putting on, as seemed most promotive of her avarice, were now galling to an excess. Every advice was taken, without the means of liberation being in the power of human device to suggest. To acquiesce in that which could not be remedied, seemed the dernier resort. The Duke of Kingston's attachment was ardent, and truly

truly sincere. He mingled the friend with the lover; nor was there an endearing title under Heaven he would not have assumed, could but the assumption have advanced the happiness of Miss Chudleigh. For a series of years they cohabited, yet with such observance of external decorum, that although their intimacy was a moral, it was not an evidenced certainty. That the felicity of the Duke was in any means promoted by this union, cannot be asserted consistent with truth. The parties were diametrically opposite characters. The Duke was mild, gracious, unassuming and bashful in the extreme. He had every grace requisite in a man of rank. Ostentation he so much detested, that it was his custom in perambulating the street, to fold back the front of his coat so as to hide the star—and whenever by accident it was discovered, the disclosure caused an involuntary blush. His Lady possessed very different qualities. In vociferating anger she could fairly boast an alliance with Juno. Ostentatious she was to an excess, and so little sublimed were her feelings, that the grossest flattery was an animated cordial to her spirits. It revived her when more rational succours failed of effect. Thus contrarily gifted and disposed, the Duke and Miss Chudleigh were frequently on discordant terms—but she had a strong hold of his mind,

mind, and the use she made of it was, finally to ruin herself. The Earl of Bristol, by time and attachments, had grown so weary of his connubial state, as to be cordially desirous of a change. At first, when founded on the subject of a divorce, he had used this expression—"I will see the — at the "devil, before her vanity should be gratified "by being a Dutchess."—Afterwards, however, there being a Lady to whom he wished to offer his hand, he so altered his tone, as to express a readiness to consent to any possible means of annihilating the union subsisting between him and Miss Chudleigh.—The Civilians were consulted—a jactitation suit was instituted—the evidence who could prove the marriage was kept back.—

Lord Bristol failing, as it was designed he should fail, in substantiating the marriage, a sentence of the court, pronouncing the nullity of the claim, concluded the business. The object now to be obtained was, legal opinion as to the operative power of such a sentence; and the Civilians, highly tenacious of the rights of their own courts, adjudged the decree not liable to be disturbed by the interference of any extrinsic court of judicature. Under conviction of perfect safety, the marriage between his Grace of Kingston and Miss Chudleigh was publickly solemnized.

nized. The favours were worn by the highest personages in the kingdom; and, during the life of the Duke, not any attempt was made to dispute the legality of the procedure. The fortune was not entailed; his Grace had, therefore, the option to bequeath it as seemed best to his inclination. The heirs since, were then expectants; the claims rested on hope, not certainty. The Dutches, for so she is now to be styled, figured without apprehension or controul. She was raised to the pinnacle of her fate, and for a very few years did she enjoy, that to which the chicanery of her life had been directed to accomplish, the parade of title without that honour which only can ennable.—To impede her in the career of enjoyment, and finally put an end to all her greatness, the Duke of Kingston died. His will, excluding from every benefit an elder, and preferring a younger nephew as his heir in tail, gave rise to a prosecution of the Dutches, which ended in the beggary of her prosecutor, and the exile of herself.

The demise of the Duke of Kingston was not unexpected by those who observe the several premonitions of the King of Terrors. A paralytic stroke is among the harbingers of mortal dissolution, which is sure to be followed speedily by the event announced. The Duke lingered but

but a short time, and that time was employed by his consort in journeying his Grace about, under the futile idea, by change of air and situation, of retarding the irreversible decree of Omnipotence. At last, when real danger seemed to threaten, even in the opinion of the Dutches, she dispatched one of her swiftest-footed messengers to her Solicitor, the late Mr. Field, of the Temple, requiring his immediate attendance. He obeyed the summons, and arriving at the house, the Dutches privately imparted her wishes, which were, that he would procure the Duke to execute, and be himself a subscribing witness, to a will, made without his knowledge, and more to the taste of the Dutches, than the one compleated. The difference between these two wills was this: The Duke had bequeathed the income of his estates to his relict, during her life, and expressly under condition of her continuing in a state of widowhood. Whether his Grace, in thus restraining her, did it in order to prevent the dishonour of his memory by the introduction of an improper successor; or, whether he acted from a consciousness of her extreme liability, with all her manoeuvring, to be imposed on, must be left to conjecture.

Perfectly satisfied, however, as was the Dutches with whatever appeared to be the inclination of her dearest Lord, she could not

not resist the seeming opportunity of carrying her secret wishes into effect. She did not relish the Temple of Hymen being shut against her. Earnestly, therefore, did she press Mr. Field to have her own will immediately executed, which left her at perfect liberty to give her hand to the conqueror of her heart. She was only by some years on the wrong side of fifty; and the celebrated *Ninon de l' Enclos* bloomed at three score, and captivated at seventy. Here was an example which every amorous grandmother might have in view; and extremely cruel would it be, to restrict ladies ancient only in years, from matrimony, as the mean to keep their blood within the bounds of decorum. The Dutches in her anxiety to have the restraint shaken off, had nearly deprived herself of every benefit derivable from the death of the Duke.

When Mr. Field was introduced to his Grace, his intellects were perceptibly affected. He knew the friend who approached him, and a transient knowledge of their persons was the only indication of mental exertion which seemed to be left him. Field very properly remonstrated on the impropriety of introducing a will, for execution, to a man in such a state. His remonstrance occasioned a severe reprobation from the Dutches,

who reminded him, that he ought only to obey the instructions of his employer. Feeling, however, for his professional character, he positively refused either to tender the will, or be in any manner concerned in endeavouring to procure the execution. With this refusal he quitted the house, the Dutchesf beholding him with an indignant eye, as the annoyer of her scheme, when, in fact, by not complying with it, he proved her temporal saviour; for, had the will she proposed been executed, it would most indubitably have been set aside. The heirs would consequently have excluded the relief from every thing, except that to which the right of dower entitled her; and, the marriage being invalidated, the lady in this, as in other respects, would have been ruined by her own stratagem.

Soon after the frustration of this attempt, the Duke of Kingston yielded to the stroke of fate. His will divulged, the funeral rites performed, and all other obsequial matters being properly adjusted, the Dutchesf embarked for the continent, proposing Rome for the city of her temporary residence. Ganganelli at that time filled the Papal See. From the moderation of his principles, the consequent tolerant spirit, which he, on every occasion, displayed, and the marked attention

tion he bestowed on the English, he acquired the title of the Protestant Pope. To such a character, the Dutchesse was a welcome visitor. Ganganelli treated her with the utmost civility, gave her, as a Sovereign Prince, many privileges, and she was lodged in the Palace of one of the Cardinals. Her vanity thus gratified, her Grace in return treated the Romans with a public spectacle. She had built an elegant pleasure yacht; a gentleman, who had served in the navy, was the commander: under her orders he sailed for Italy, and the vessel, at considerable trouble and some expence, was conveyed up the Tiber. The sight of an English yacht there, was uncommon. It drew the people in crowds to the shore, and the applause ran general through the city. This seemed to be the æra of festivity and happiness; but while the bark floated triumphantly on the undulations of the Tiber, a business was transacting in England which put an end to all momentary bliss. Mrs. Cradock, a woman now living, who, in the capacity of a domestic, had been present during the ceremony of marriage between Miss Chudleigh and Lord Bristol, found herself so reduced in circumstances, that she applied to Mr. Field for pecuniary relief. He saw her, and most injudiciously refused her every succour. In vain she urged her distress, and the absence of the

Dutchess, who was the only person on whose munificence she had the justest claim. Field was deaf to her entreaties : she then told him what was in her power to discover. To many circumstances which she related, he was an entire stranger, and he affected to discredit the rest. Mrs. Cradock ended the interview with a menace, that she would make the relations of the Duke of Kingston acquainted with every important particular. Field set her at defiance, and, thus exposed to penury, she was exasperated to vengeance, and instantly set about the work of ruin.

His Grace of Kingston had borne to his grave a marked dislike of one of his nephews. His private reason was well known to his confidential friends. Mr. Evelyn Meadows had been in, and went out of, the navy. Let it suffice to say, that the Duke chose him not for his heir. He was one of the sons of Lady Francis Pierpont, sister of the Duke of Kingston, consequently his nephew—but his Grace liked him not. The Gentleman excluded his presumptive heirship, joyfully received the information that a method of doing himself substantial justice remained. He saw Mrs. Cradock—heard the detail of evidence which she offered—and, perfectly satisfied as to every iota of the relation being true, he, assisted by legal friends, had a bill of indictment

indictment for bigamy preferred against the supposed widow of the Duke of Kingston. The bill was found—Mr. Field had notice of the procedure, and the Dutchess was properly advised to return instantly to England, and appear to the indictment to prevent an outlawry. The intelligence operated like a too powerful electrical shock—her nature with difficulty sustained it. On recovering the little of her judgment which was left, she drove to the house of Mr. Jenkins; a gentleman who has acquired a large property by small means, commencing with the purchase of the little finger of a mutilated statue, and ending in what he now is, the Banker to all British travellers who visit the tutelary residence of Saint Peter.

To baffle art by art, and defeat, by policy, that which true wisdom could not oppose with a probability of success, is the custom of every hackneyed practitioner in the world. It is owing to their excellence in this system, that the sons of earth are so much wiser, in their several generations, than the children of light. The Dutchess of Kingston was merely a woman of cunning, trusting solely to her machinations for success. Hence the barometer of her happiness rose,

rose, or was depressed, as her multifarious manœuvres produced what her chimerical fancy termed good, or evil. The slightest check in the career of vanity; the least failure in the accomplishment of any vain-glorious project, occasioned a sigh. What then must the prospect of being compelled to bid farewell to all her greatness, have effected! Those least accustomed to reflect, are the most depressed by reflection. The attack made on the honours of the Dutches, struck also at her principles and character. She knew, and she felt, that if the whole of her conduct should be bared to the light, a consummate degree of moral turpitude would appear. As to the marriage with his Grace of Kingston, the solemn opinions of the civilians might be urged in extenuation; but those opinions were obtained by partial facts only appearing to them. The Earl of Bristol had boasted of a marriage. The lady whom he had denominated his wife, put him to the proof of the marriage; and with perfect safety she might do this, when she had taken previous care to prevent the only witness who could prove the fact, from giving testimony in the cause. Here was fraud; and if Lord Bristol acquiesced in it, there was collusion. Another thing;—there was certainly extreme turpitude in the act of destroying the register of the marriage with the noble Earl, at one time;

time; and there was the utmost sordidness in endeavouring to restore something like it, when likely to answer a selfish purpose. All these circumstances of evil doing afforded miserable themes for reflection; and the period was now arrived, when reflection came with a vengeance at her heels—but, alternative there was none.

An immediate return to England was the only measure to be adopted, and this the opponents of the Duchess had endeavoured to prevent, by a species of artful policy, exactly suited to the lady with whom they had to deal. Mr. Jenkins was then a banker. The Duchess had placed securities in his hands, answerable for the sums she might occasionally require. He was perfectly secure in any advance he might make; yet, apprized that the Duchess would call on him for money to defray the expence of her journey to England, he avoided seeing her. On the first announcement of his not being at home, it was passed over as a mere unfortunate accident; but on the visits being repeated, and the denials being as frequent, the conduct was justly imputed to design. The scheme was to delay the return of the Duchess, so as that an outlawry might be obtained; which, in the eye of imagination, appeared the probable method of acquiring the estates of the late

late Duke. This was folly, because the will of his Grace, in his own hand-writing, was so guarded, as not to be attacked with the remotest possibility of success. Such, however, was the idea; and from whatever personable motive it originated, Mr. Jenkins assuredly coincided with the plan. Aware of this, the Dutchesse was incessant in her applications; and finding all her efforts to see Mr. Jenkins fail, she pocketed a brace of pistols, returned to his house, and receiving the usual answer that he was not at home, she sat on the steps of his door, and declared her determined resolution there to remain until he returned, were it for a week, month, or year. She knew that business would compel his return; and finding it impracticable any longer to elude an interview, Mr. Jenkins appeared! —As the Dutchesse possessed that blessed gift of utterance, for which ladies of spirit are sometimes so eminently famous, it may be supposed that the conversation with the banker was not of the mildest kind. Money was demanded, not asked. A little prevarication ensued; but the production of a pistol served as the most powerful mode of reasoning: the necessary was obtained, and the Dutchesse instantly quitted Rome.

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We are now to behold the object of our succinct detail, in a light pitiable in the extreme. About to combat a prosecution, the event of which, the monitor within must inform the culprit would be fatal ; a series of reflections, and each accompanied by a censure, crowding on the mind, and putting the perturbed spirits on the rack of painful sensation ; attended only by domestics, and wanting the consolation of a friend, each pace was a nearer approach to misery, and every hour only the anticipation of future woe. This was enough to overpower nature ; nor will it be deemed surprizing, that under such oppressive circumstances, the health of the Dutchess should be violently attacked. Her journey was retarded before she reached the Alps. A violent fever seemed to seize on her vitals. From that she recovered, to the astonishment of her attendants. An abscess then formed in her side, which rendering it impossible for her to endure the motion of a carriage, a kind of a litter was provided, in which she gently travelled. In this situation, nature was relieved by the breaking of the abscess ; and after a tediously painful journey, the Dutchess reached Calais. At that place she made a pause, and there it was that her apprehension got the better of her reason. In idea she was fettered and incarcerated in the worst cell of the worst prison in London. She was totally

tally ignorant of the bailable nature of her offence, and by consequence expected the utmost to be imagined. Colonel West, a brother of the late Lord Delaware, whom the Dutchesse had known in England, became her principal associate; but he was not lawyer sufficient to satisfy her doubts.

By the means of former connections, and through a benevolence in his own nature, the Earl of Mansfield had a private intercourse with the Dutchesse. Without mentioning the place of meeting, suffice it to observe, that this venerable Peer, who, having nearly finished his course, is now subliming in spirit preparatory to the fruition of celestial happiness, conducted himself in a manner which did honour to his heart and character. Her spirits soothed, and her futile apprehensions removed by the interview, the Dutchesse embarked for Dover, landed, drove post to Kingston-House, and found friends displaying both zeal and alacrity in her cause.

The present Duke of Newcastle was steadily devoted to her welfare. The Dukes of Ancaster and Portland testified their sincere good wishes; Lord Mountstuart shewed, in numerous instances, his kindness; and there were not wanting a circle of other distinguished

The prosecution, and consequent trial of the Dutches, becoming objects of magnitude, the public curiosity and expectation were proportionably excited. The Dutches had, through life, distinguished herself as a most eccentric character. Her turn of mind was original, and many of her actions were without a parallel. Even when she moved in the sphere of amusement, it was in a style peculiarly her own. If others invited admiration by a partial display of their charms, at a masquerade, she at once threw off the veil, and set censure at defiance. Thus at a midnight assembly, where Bacchus revelled, and the altars of Venus were encircled by the votaries of Love, the Dutches, then denominated Miss Chudleigh, appeared almost in the unadorned simplicity of primitive nature. Whether to demonstrate how nearly she was allied to her ancestress, Eve, before the fall; or, whether from a religious veneration of the customs which prevailed in Eden; whatever was her motive, certain it is, that she was every thing but *naked*; and yet, like our first parents, she was not *ashamed*. Thus erratic in her nature, the dilemma into which she was thrown by the pending prosecution, was scarcely more than might be expected to happen to such a character. She had, in a manner, invited the disgrace, by neglecting the means of preventing it. Mrs. Cradock,

the only existing evidence against her, had personally solicited a maintenance for the remaining years of her life. On a certain annual stipend being settled on her, she had voluntarily offered to retire to her native village, and never more intrude. This offer was rejected by the Dutches, who would only consent to allow her twenty pounds a year, on condition of her sequestering herself in some place near the *Peak of Derbyshire*. This the Dutches considered as a most liberal offer ; and, she expressed her astonishment that the "*Old Devil*," as she used to call her, should have had the assurance to reject it. To her cost in purse, and to her agony in mind, it was rejected with the utmost scorn, and she who was refused a paltry pittance, except on condition of banishment for life, might afterwards have received thousands to abscond. The impulse of fear would produce what the feelings of humanity never could call forth.

From the moment in which the recognizances for the appearance of the Dutches were entered into, a scene of law disclosed itself. Books of cases were purchased in abundance, precedents were blotted with ink, the pages doubled down, and pins stuck in the several notes of reference. Instead of travelling like a Jew pedlar with a diamond

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box at her back, Taylor's *Elements of Civil Law*, Coke's *Institutes*, some history of the Privileges of Peers to be doubly married, or a volume of the State Trials, garnished the coach in which the Dutchesse drove from his Grace of Newcastle to Mr. Armstrong, the Sheriff's officer. By the Gentlemen of the long robe, as it may be naturally supposed, the Dutchesse was surrounded, and so charitably were they disposed, that they gave her every consolation she could wish. The Civilians were armed at all points to prove, that a sentence of their courts was an effectual bar to the admission of evidence. Like Fate, an ecclesiastical decree was irrevocable. The common lawyers on the other hand smiled, or affected to smile, at the idea of a conviction. It was a mere phantom conjured up in the hour of dismay for the purpose of affrighting. Under these assurances, the Dutchesse was as quiet as the troublesome Monitor in her bosom would give permission. When a gentle hint of possible danger was suggested by any of the disinterested Few, the mercenary Many instantly soothed all into peace.

Reconciled, therefore, in some measure, to the encounter, her repose was on a sudden interrupted by the late celebrated Mr. Sam. Foote, then manager of the

Haymarket Theatre. Mixing, as this gentleman did, in the first circles of fashion, he was perfectly acquainted with the leading transactions of the life of her Grace of Kingston. Besides this, he had received much instruction, and that of a private kind, from some person who had lived in the house with her : and possessing it, Foote resolved to make something of what he thus knew. He had written a piece, entitled, "*A Trip to Calais.*" The scenes were humorous, the character of the Dutchess was most admirably drawn, and the effect was accomplished ; which was, that she should see and be ashamed of herself. The real design of Foote was, to obtain a considerable sum of money from her Grace, for suppressing the piece. An indifferent person had with this view communicated to the Dutchess, that the Theatre would open with this comedy. This was intended to alarm, and it did effectually alarm her. She procured from Mr. Foote a perusal of the piece ; but so much did her Grace dislike her own picture, that she determined, if possible, to prevent the exposure of it to public view. As the satirist had no objection to selling it, she inclined to be the purchaser. Foote demanded two thousand pounds. She offered him fourteen, then sixteen hundred pounds : but this yielding only induced Foote to think

think that he should finally succeed, until by grasping at too much, he overstood his market, and lost every thing. The critical period in which Mr. Foote made his attempt to extort from the Dutchesse the enormous sum above-mentioned, was such as to interest every friend in her behalf. His Grace of Newcastle was consulted. The Chamberlain of the Household was apprized of the circumstance: He sent for the manuscript copy of the "Trip to Calais," perused and censured it. Beside these and other powerful aids, the Dutchesse called in jurif-prudential advice. The sages of the robe were consulted, their opinions were "That "the piece was a malicious libel, and that "should it be represented, a short-hand "writer ought to be employed by the "Dutchesse to attend on the night of repre- "sentation to minute each offensive passage, "as the ground work of a prosecution." This advice was followed by the Dutchesse, and Blanchard, the short-hand writer, was retained. Whether Foote received private intimation of the scheme, or whether he found his attempt on the purse of the Dutchesse excite the displeasure of those whose favours were of consequence to him, he began to be intimidated. The proof which he gave of it was, a denial that he ever had made so exorbitant a demand as two thousand pounds

for the suppression of the piece. But an affidavit voluntarily made by the Rev. Mr. Foster, a clergyman of respectability, so completely refuted this denial of Mr. Foote's, as not to leave it in the power of ingenuity to retort. Thus defeated in point of fact, Foote found himself baffled also in point of design. The Chamberlain would not permit the piece to be represented.—So little did Foote relish the deprivation of the 1600l. originally offered by the Dutchess, that he opened a new negotiation with her, causing it to be intimated, “ That it was in “ his power to publish, if not to perform; “ but that were his expences reimbursed, “ (and the sum which her Grace had for-“ merly offered him would do the busines) “ he would desist.” This intimation being communicated to the Dutchess, she did in this, as in too many cases, ask the opinion of her friends, with a secret determination to follow her own. Foote finding that she began to yield, pressed his desire incessantly; and she had actually provided bills to the amount of 1600l. which she would have given Foote, but for the following circumstance: The late Earl of Peterborough, the Rev. Mr. Foster, Mr. Field the Solicitor, and Dr. Schomberg, remarkable for having been pilloried for a libel against the present government; were alternately consulted, and they

they severally reprobated the demand as a scandalous imposition, with which it would be weakness to comply. His Grace of Lancaster, and the Rev. Mr. Jackson, who was at that time Editor of a political paper in some estimation, coincided likewise in the above opinion. Mr. Foster, the proper Chaplain of the Dutches, was then solicited to wait on Mr. Foote, but professing himself to be too far advanced in years to enter the field of literary combat, Mr. Jackson consented to be the champion.—After the usual ceremonies, Mr. Jackson told Mr. Foote, “ That he came as a friend of the Dutches’s, “ and wished to be favoured with a categorical answer to this question; Whether he “ meant to publish the piece, called A “ Trip to Calais?” Mr. Foote was about to enter into a long detail respecting the vast expence which had been incurred, when Mr. J. interrupted him thus; “ If, Sir, you “ mean, by informing me of the expence, to “ intimate an expectation that the whole, or “ any part of it, should be defrayed by the “ Dutches, I fairly tell you that you will “ find yourself mistaken; she will not give “ you one guinea.” Foote endeavoured to turn this off by a laugh, and instead of replying to the point, he begged Mr. J. would hear him read a letter, which he had written to the Earl of Hertford, then Chamberlain,

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complaining of the hardship of prohibiting the representation of a piece, merely because some lady of quality might suppose herself ridiculed for *pinning her tucker awry*. There was point, wit, and brilliancy in the letter, but it was not an answer to the question. Mr. J. wished Mr. Foote a good morning, and was about to retire, when Foote put his hand on his shoulder and said, "What! and " so I am to be attacked if I publish The " Trip to Calais." Mr. Jackson replied, " The publication will be an attack from " you, Mr. Foote, the effect of which, I, as " the friend of the Dutches, will do my ut- " most to prevent." Here the interview ended.—Foote, however, still wished to have matters compromised, and a meeting to take place. To accomplish this he addressed a letter to the Dutches, which stated, " That " he was ready to have every thing adjusted." This letter gave the Dutches a triumph. There was concession in every line. She sent for Mr. Jackson; thanked him ten thousand times for his interference; declared that he had saved her 1600l. She desired him in her name, to answer Foote's letter, and publish both. This he declined, alledging that a newspaper controversy would degrade her. She, however, thought otherwise. The letter of Mr. Foote, her Grace's own answer, and the rejoinder of the wit, consequently ap-peared.

peared. In the latter piece Foote compared the Dutches to the Weeping Widow renowned in ancient story, converted her weeds into *canonicals* for Mr. Jackson, and applied the following quoted line, as applicable to her supposed amorous condition:

“ So mourn’d the dame of Ephesus her Love.”

While the Dutches, openly affecting a most earnest desire to have the trial accelerated, was, however, secretly employed in trying every stratagem, to elude the measures taken against her; a favourable opportunity offered, which had she embraced, her purpose would have been accomplished. The critical moment thus presented itself: It became a matter of debate, in the House of Peers, on account of the expence which would be incurred by the nation, whether the trial of her Grace should, or should not, be carried on in Westminster-hall? Lord Mansfield thus delivered his sentiments: “ But the arguments about the place of trial, “ suggest to my mind a question as to the “ propriety of any trial at all. *Cui Bono?* “ What utility is to be obtained suppose a “ conviction to be the result? The Lady “ makes your Lordships a *curtsey*, and you “ return a *bow*.” The tendency of the observation was extremely perceptible; and aware of the private influence which Lord Mansfield

Mansfield had at the time, it was apprehended that he might so exert it, as to defeat, by some means or other, the purpose aimed at.— An hint was privately conveyed, that the sum of ten thousand pounds would satisfy every expectation, and put an end to the prosecution. This hint she rejected with an air of insult. From Dr. Collier, the Civilian, to Mr. Wallace, the Counsel, the language uniformly held was, “That the Dutches had not any thing to fear.” Under these assurances of safety, the Dutches assumed an indifference about the business which but ill accorded with her situation: still, however, she did not abandon her manœuvring. On the contrary, at the moment in which she had claimed her privilege as a Peeres, and petitioned for a speedy trial, she was busied in a scheme to get hold of the principal evidence, Mrs. Cradock, and prevail on her to quit the kingdom. Foiled, however, in this project, which had a plausible aspect of success, the only measure left was, the best possible arrangement of matters preparatory for the trial.

On the 15th day of April, 1776, the business came on in Westminster-hall. It was of five days continuance, and the principal object argued was, the admission, or not, of a sentence, of the Spiritual Court, in a suit for *jalitation* of marriage, so as to stop the proof of a marriage, in an indictment for Polygamy. The Judges deciding against the admission of such a sentence in bar to evidence,

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evidence, the fact of the two marriages was most clearly proved, and a conviction, of course, followed. His Grace of Kingston's will having been drawn up with such legal caution, that although the law had declared her second marriage void, yet she continued to enjoy for life, the great revenues left her by his Grace.

The solemn business being concluded, the prosecutors had a plan in embryo to confine the Countess of Bristol (for so, after conviction, she in reality was) to this country; and to have her deprived of her personal property. A writ of "*Ne exeat regno*" was preparing, of which the Lady received private notice, and being advised instantaneously to leave the kingdom, she drove post to Dover, from whence she was conveyed, in the first open boat that could be hired, to Calais. As it was the lot of the Dutches, for so she must still be styled, for the sake of uniformity in the narrative, to be perpetually on the remove, some incidents had happened at Rome, which rendered it necessary for her once more to visit that renowned city. Her stay, however, at the metropolis, of the Holy See was but short, as not many weeks had elapsed from the time of her departure, till that of her arrival again at Calais. The expeditious communication between Calais and England, afforded her Grace the earliest intelligence she could wish relative to the proceedings of her opponents. Their business was now, if possible, to set aside the will of the Duke of Kingston. There was not a probability of their succeeding in the attempt, but still the attempt was to be made.

Previous to her Trial, the Dutches had formed a design to visit Petersburgh. A ship had been built for her, in which was a drawing-room, and every splendid accommodation. It was ordered to Calais; and the arrangement of the suite depending on the will of the Dutches, a whimsical assemblage of characters were blended. The voyage being favourable, she soon reached Petersburgh. Her arrival being announced, the

the Empress dispensing with public forms, received her with great politeness and condescension. Notwithstanding, however, several marked favours of her Majesty to the Dutches, yet the latter could not be satisfied, unless admitted among the number of those ladies at the Court of Petersburgh who wear the picture of the Empress as the ensign of an Order. But it was an invariable rule that *foreigners* could not be admitted. This disappointment in ambition occasioned a resolution to quit the capital of her Imperial Majesty of Russia.

The will of his Grace of Kingston receiving every confirmation which the Courts of Justice could give : to dissipate, rather than properly expend, the income of his estates, appeared to be the ruling passion of her life. To the career of vanity there is not an end : And thus proceeding from enterprize to enterprize, the hour arrived in which the Dutches would not be permitted a longer resident of our lower world. She was at dinner, when her servants suddenly communicating to her a piece of bad news, she flew into a violent passion, and in the agitation of her mind and body, her Grace burst an internal blood vessel. Even this, however, she appeared to have surmounted, until a few days afterwards, on the morning of the 26th of August, when, about to rise from her bed, a servant endeavoured at dissuasion. The Dutches, however, rose—walked about the saloon by the aid of her secretary—drank two glasses of Madeira, and afterwards said “ I will lay on the couch. I can sleep, and after a sleep I shall be entirely recovered.” She sat on the conch, a female having hold of each hand. In this situation, she soon appeared to have fallen into a sound sleep, until the woman found her hands colder than ordinary : an affright ensued ; the domestics were rang for, and the Dutches was found to have expired, as the wearied labourer sinks into the arms of rest. The Dutches was born in 1720 ; consequently she was 68 years of age.



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